

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 9267

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNGA, PORG
SUBJECT: BITSIOS' IMPRESSIONS OF NEW YORK MEETINGS

1. I ASKED TO CALL ON BITSIOS SHORTLY AFTER HE RETURNED TO GET HIS IMPRESSIONS OF HIS TALKS IN NEW YORK AND HIS VIEW OF PROSPECTS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. BITSIOS OPENED OUR CONVERSATION OCTOBER 11 BY SAYING THAT THE ONLY REALLY POSITIVE IMPRESSION HE BROUGHT BACK WAS THAT ALL THE FOREIGN MINISTERS HE SPOKE WITH, INCLUDING SECRETARY VANCE AND THE EUROPEANS BUT EXCLUDING CAGLAYANGIL, OF COURSE, NOW SEEM TO REALIZE THAT NEXT STEP IN RESOLVING THE CYPRUS PROBLEM IS UP TO THE TURKISH SIDE. HE WAS SCATHING ABOUT CAGLAYANGIL'S PERFORMANCE BOTH IN THEIR BILATERAL DISCUSSION AND AFTER HIS RETURN TO ANKARA WHEN HE MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT GIVING "A TOTALLY DISTORTED VERSION" OF WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED IN NEW YORK AND OF THE REALITIES OF THE CYPRUS SITUATION. BITSIOS READ ME LONG EXCERPTS OF A CABLE FROM GREEK EMBASSY ANKARA REPORTING ON CAGLAYANGIL'S STATEMENT, AND AFTER EVERY POINT HE TURNED TO ME AS IF TO SAY, "HOW COULD HE SAY THAT?" I COMMENTED THAT IN VIEW OF PRESS REPORTS WE ARE GETTING FROM ANKARA THAT MAKE IT LOOK LIKE THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT IS AGAIN VERY SHAKY, PERHAPS CAGLAYANGIL'S REMARKS WERE STRICTLY TO GIVE HIS DOMESTIC AUDIENCE WHAT IT WANTED TO HEAR.

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BITSIOS REPLIED, "I KNOW, I KNOW, BUT WE'VE BEEN HEARING THAT FOR YEARS. HOW CAN YOU DEAL WITH SOMEONE WHO DISTORTS THE FACTS FOR HIS OWN PEOPLE? HE SHOULD EITHER HAVE TOLD THEM THE TRUTH OR SAID NOTHING AT ALL, WHICH IS WHAT I DID WHEN I RETURNED."

2. BITSIOS DESCRIBED HIS LUNCH WITH CAGLAYANGIL MUCH THE WAY IT WAS REPORTED IN STATE 242406, EXCEPT HE THOUGHT THE ATMOSPHERE

DURING LUNCH HAD BEEN CORDIAL AND PROMISING. FOR THIS REASON, HE WAS ALL THE MORE DISAPPOINTED IN THE DISCUSSION AFTER LUNCH WHEN CAGLAYANGIL "PLAYED THE FOOL" (BITSIOS SAID HE WOULD NOT WANT IT LEARNED THAT HE HAD DESCRIBED A FELLOW FOREIGN MINISTER THAT WAY). CAGLAYANGIL PULLED FROM HIS POCKET A LONG LIST OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT ALLEGED GREEK ACTIONS AND PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS AND PROCEEDED TO READ THEM OFF. AFTER HEARING A FEW OF THEM BITSIOS TOLD CAGLAYANGIL HE HAD NOT GONE THERE TO HEAR HIS COUNTRY MALIGNED AND REFUSED TO GET INTO A POINT-BY-POINT REBUTTAL. REGARDING CAGLAYANGIL'S "DISTORTED" ACCOUNT OF BITSIOS' REMARKS AT UNGA, BITSIOS TURNED TO AMBASSADOR TURKMEN AND SAID HE WAS SURE THAT HE AT LEAST HAD NOT MISUNDERSTOOD BITSIOS' REMARKS AND THAT PERHAPS HE WOULD CLARIFY FOR CAGLAYANGIL WHAT HAD ACTUALLY BEEN SAID. BITSIOS TOLD ME IT SEEMED CLEAR THIS LIST OF COMPLAINTS HAD BEEN PREPARED BY TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO ATHENS TEZEL WHO HAD NOT SERVED HIS COUNTRY VERY WELL THEREBY. BITSIOS SAID THE ONLY CONSTRUCTIVE POINT CAGLAYANGIL HAD MADE DURING THE WHOLE MEETING WAS TO SAY THE GOT WAS NOW PREPARED TO RESPOND TO THE GREEK PROPOSALS ON THE AEGEAN MADE LAST JUNE AND THAT HE HOPED THE NEGOTIATION COULD BE RESUMED SOON. BITSIOS HAD REPLIED THAT THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL AFTER THE GREEK ELECTIONS, AND CAGLAYANGIL HAD UNDERSTOOD.

3. BITSIOS DESCRIBED HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE SECRETARY AS A GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON ALL THE EXPECTED TOPICS. NEAR THE END THE SECRETARY HAD ASKED HIM TO EXPLAIN PERSONALLY THE GOG'S POSITION ON AMBASSADOR SCHAUFEELE, AND BITSIOS HAD DONE SO. THE
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SECRETARY THEN SAID HE WOULD REFLECT ON THOSE VIEWS AND LET BITSIOS KNOW LATER WHAT HE HAD DECIDED. BITSIOS SAID HE HAD HOPED TO GET THE MATTER OUT OF THE WAY BUT KNEW IT WAS A SERIOUS AND DELICATE SUBJECT AND DID NOT WANT TO PRESS TOO HARD.

4. THE DISCUSSION WITH SECRETARY CLIFFORD HAD BEEN MORE EXTENSIVE AND DETAILED, ACCORDING TO BITSIOS. CLIFFORD HAD TOLD HIM HE WAS CONVINCED THE TURKS WERE NOW PREPARED TO DO WHAT THEY COULD TO SETTLE THE CYPRUS PROBLEM, BUT HE HAD NOT GIVEN SPECIFIC REASONS LEADING TO THAT CONCLUSION AND BITSIOS DID NOT FEEL HE COULD PROBE. FOR HIS PART, BITSIOS TOLD CLIFFORD THERE WAS A CLEAR LINKAGE BETWEEN SIGNATURE OF THE GREEK DCA AND PROGRESS ON CYPRUS. THIS IS BECAUSE IT IS OBVIOUS TO ALL THAT PRESENTING THE GREEK DCA TO CONGRESS WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO GET THE TURKISH DCA THROUGH, AND IF THE GOG HELPED DO THAT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON CYPRUS IT WOULD BE BRANDED A TRAITOR TO THE GREEK CYPRIOT CAUSE. I ASKED IF CLIFFORD HAD ACCEPTED THAT REASONING. BITSIOS SAID HE HAD AT LEAST UNDERSTOOD THE GREEK POSITION.

5. KYPRIANOU TOLD BITSIOS IN NEW YORK THAT THE GREEK CYPRIOTS WANTED ANOTHER ROUND OF INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS BEFORE THE END OF YEAR. WALDHEIM WAS RESISTING BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT ANOTHER SESSION

UNLESS HE HAD SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS BEFOREHAND. BITSIOS SAID HE HAD AGREED TO A RESUMPTION OF TALKS WHENEVER THEY COULD BE ORGANIZED, SINCE WITH THE UNGA CYPRUS DEBATE IN NOVEMBER IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SET UP NEW TALKS BEFORE THE GREEK ELECTIONS.

6. AS I WAS LEAVING I THANKED BITSIOS FOR SHARING HIS IMPRESSIONS WITH ME. HE REPLIED THAT IT WAS MOST APPROPRIATE TO DO SO SINCE I REPRESENTED THE USG HERE NOW AND, HE ADDED, LOOKING ME STRAIGHT IN THE EYE, "IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WILL FOR A LONG TIME TO COME."
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